

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 L-03 EB-07 AID-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 /062 W

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R 201220Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7416

INFO USUN 394

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0319

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PFOR, US

SUBJ: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: GABON

REF: STATE 037591

1. IN ACCORDANCE REFTEL, DCM EDMUND T. DEJARNETTE IS DESIGNATED MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS OFFICER.

2. FOLLOWING ARE RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE PARA 7 REFTEL KEYED TO SUB-PARAS THEREIN:

(A) GOG ATTACHES PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TO CARVING OUT MAXIMUM LEADERSHIP ROLE WHICH ITS SMALL SIZE WILL PERMIT. IN MULTILATERAL FORA, AS IN OTHER ASPECTS ITS POLICY FORMULATION, GOG CAN BE EXPECTED DECIDE ISSUES PRAGMATICALLY IN RELATION TO IMPACT THEY WILL HAVE ON ACHIEVEMENT OF ITS TWO BASIC OBJECTIVES. IMMEDIATE TARGET IN ITS LEADERSHIP ASPIRATIONS IS OAU PRESIDENCY, WHICH SHOULD NORMALLY FALL TO GABON WHEN JUNE 1977 SUMMIT IS HELD IN LIBREVILLE. IN ADDITION TO OAU, GOG ATTACHES PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO US AND OPEC AMONG INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH IT BELONGS.

(B) GOG SEEKS TO KEEP IN STEP WITH PERCEIVED MAJORITY VIEW IN OAU, IN PART WITH EYE TO MAINTAINING ACCEPTABILITY OF GABON AND BONGO FOR 1977 OAU

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PRESIDENCY. HOWEVER, INFLUENCE IS TWO-WAY, AND GOG

HAS ON OCCASION MADE VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO ADVANCE ITS OWN VIEWS WITHIN OAU CONTEXT. MOST NOTABLE RECENT EXAMPLE WAS ANGOLA, WHERE GOG PLAYED SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN STIFFENING MODERATE FORCES WHICH REMAINED STEADFAST AT EXTRAORDINARY OAU CM AND SUMMIT SESSIONS. BEYOND AFRICAN STATES, GOG ALSO ATTEMPTS BE RESPONSIVE TO VIEWS EXPRESSED BY GOF, USG, AND OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN GABONESE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AS FOR EXAMPLE IN SUPPORT GIVEN BY GOG ON KOREAN ISSUE LAST FALL.

(C) GOG DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS RECEIVE GENERAL GUIDELINES ON MAJOR ISSUES EXPECTED TO ARISE, BUT ARE NORMALLY UNINSTRUCTED ON PERIPHERAL ISSUES WHICH MAY CROP UP. IN THESE CASES, DELEGATIONS ARE USUALLY ON THEIR OWN, AND TEND SIMPLY TO FOLLOW WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE AFRICAN CONSENSUS WITHOUT ATTEMPTING REFER BACK TO LIBREVILLE. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THIS HAS PRODUCED SUCH UNFORTUNATE RESULTS AS GOG ACQUIESCENCE IN LIMA NAC DECLARATION ON PUERTO RICO, SO THAT WE HAVE ENCOURAGED GABONESE TO BRIEF DELEGATIONS MORE THOROUGHLY ON WIDER RANGE OF POSSIBLE ISSUES.

(D) IN HIGHLY CENTRALIZED GOG, WHERE DECISIONS EMANATE FROM PRESIDENT BONGO, ALL HEADS OF DELEGATION ARE APPROXIMATELY EQUAL IN EXTENT OF THEIR INSTRUCTIONS AND SCOPE OF THEIR AUTHORITY TO ACT INDEPENDENTLY. IN EFFECT, EVEN MOST SENIOR MINISTERS ARE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW GUIDELINES LAID DOWN BY PRESIDENT, AND ARE UNLIKELY TO MAKE FUNDAMENTAL SHIFTS IN POSITION WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION FROM LIBREVILLE. ON PERIPHERAL ISSUES, HOWEVER, WHERE DELEGATIONS LACK INSTRUCTIONS, GOG REPRESENTATIONS WHICH CAN RELATE POSITIONS WE ADVOCATE TO GABONESE NATIONAL INTERESTS OR TO PRECEDENTS OF PRIOR GABONESE VOTES.

(E) GOG HAS SHOWN ITSELF HIGHLY RECEPTIVE TO USG REPRESENTATIONS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES AND HAS FAIRLY SOPHISTICATED APPRECIATION OF THEIR PLACE IN OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. PROBLEM IN SOME INSTANCES HAS ARISEN WITH GETTING REPRESENTATIONS IN LIBREVILLE TRANSLATED INTO INSTRUCTIONS TO GOG DELEGATIONS (AS ON KOREAN ISSUE), AND FUTURE PROBLEM MAY ARISE IF GOG FEELS IT IS NOT RECEIVING ADEQUATE QUID PRO QUO FOR ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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SUPPORT OF USG POSITION ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO US. THUS FAR, THERE HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY NO RECIPROCAL SOLICITATION OF USG SUPPORT ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES. STEIGMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, ECONOMIC GROWTH, FOREIGN RELATIONS, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LIBREV00319
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760064-0764
From: LIBREVILLE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760231/aaaabain.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 37591
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: GABON
TAGS: PORG, PFOR, US, OPEC, OAU, (DEJARNETTE, EDMUND T)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006